



Milton Baptist Church

love God – love each other – love Weston

Church Profile

Agreed by the Church Members' Meeting 21/05/2023.



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1. Introduction

Weston-super-Mare is a community of about 85,000 people. It is a resort town on the Bristol Channel and is about twenty miles south-west of Bristol with easy access to the M5 (junction 21). The area of Milton is approximately two miles inland and is a well-established suburb of the town with a good range of housing, local shops, and schools. Over the past twenty years new housing estates have been developed in the adjoining areas of Worle, Locking Castle and Locking Parklands. When complete it is expected that these and other suburban estates will provide up to 11,000 new homes. Although many people commute to Bristol - and elsewhere, there is employment in the town and the surrounding district, chiefly in light industry and in the service, leisure, and entertainment sectors.

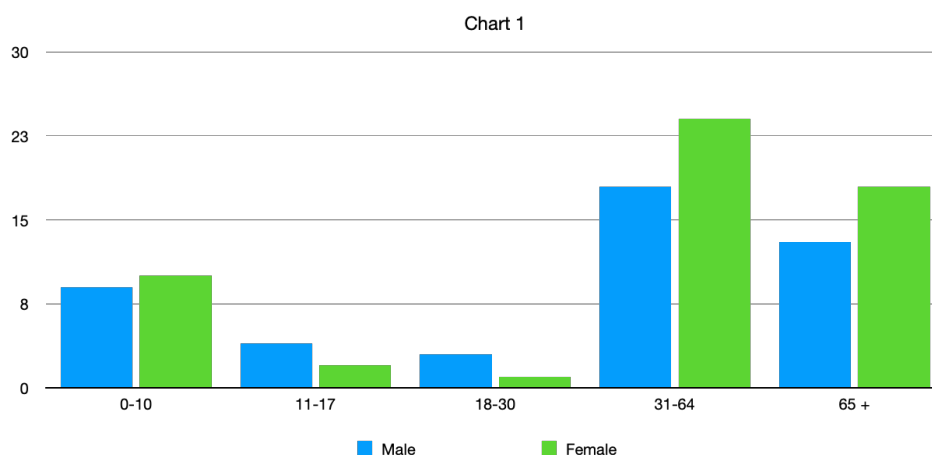
Many people retire to Weston, and much of the housing in the Milton area is suited to them. At the same time, however, there is a growing population of young families who are attracted to the town because of the facilities it offers. Some of the town's large numbers of nursing and retirement homes are in the Milton area.

Our vision as members of Milton Baptist Church is to be a strong, united, Christ-centred, Spirit-filled, Bible-based family which exists so that those in the wider communities with which we make contact will be blessed to the glory of God and become disciples themselves. Our mission statement **"Love God, love each other and love Weston"** reflects our commitment to evangelism.

2. Our Church as it is now

A. The People

Milton Baptist Church (MBC) was founded on 15th August 1926, became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2020 and it is in a residential suburb of Weston-super-Mare, with 114 members currently (not including others who regularly attend our Sunday Services). Chart 1 shows the range in age groups at our Easter Sunday service but does not include those watching on-line.



Members: Demographically, the church has a larger proportion of older members than in the surrounding population. Ethnic origin matches the wider community, being predominantly white although we have several families from different countries around the world. Weston includes some areas that score high on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The Milton area includes two areas of social housing and also has some homes in multiple occupation. Low incomes may be typical of these circumstances.

The current church **leadership team** is comprised of five men and three women. The majority are under 60 and are in full-time employment. We have two part-time staff – a Children’s and Family Pastor and a Church Administrator. We also have a pastoral Coordinator, who operates outside the leadership team but in close contact with the Pastor and Church Secretary. Together with Clarence Park and Worle Baptist Churches we have a minister in-training placement with the three churches from 24th April 2023 until 31st July 2024 (approx. 15 months). We also are interviewing a SWYM worker, who should be with us from September 2023 for a year.

B. The Services

Until March 2020 we had two services each Sunday (09:00 and 10:30) but during ‘lockdown’ we had just one at 10:30, which was online. Our services continue to be streamed “live” on YouTube <https://www.milton-baptist.org.uk/watch-live> and reach about 100 homes within the week, but we are encouraging the fellowship to return to our 10:30 service. The 09:00 service was thought not the way forward that God was guiding us and has not been restarted following Covid, we have lost some church members who preferred the style of the 09:00 service. Services have been led (since our minister has been off sick) by a committed team of preachers and lay preachers, within and without the church, with the support and expertise of our amazing worship group and tech team.

Last year our Youth Pastor left the church to move back to her family in Essex. We recognise that our work with our youth has suffered both because of the pandemic and her departure. The group meets on a Tuesday evening (bi-weekly). We have applied for a SWYM worker to help with this gap in our provision for our youth. There have been new families joining the church, including young children and from multi-cultural backgrounds. Seeing God move, we are inspired with a new energy, a growing optimism for the future and a growing in faith. Over the last five years we have seen more families attending, the church as a whole is more willing to be vulnerable and approachable and more outward looking.

We hold a morning service with children and young people in church for the first 30 minutes or so before going to their own groups. MBC prioritises the presence of God by his Spirit in sung worship and an area of development would be to grow in the bringing of gifts of the spirit from the congregation (on Sundays and throughout the week). The services are informal and relaxed, and communion is celebrated on the third Sunday each month – a tradition which we continued whilst holding online services during the pandemic.

C. The Activities

The church runs many midweek activities:

We currently have about 12 small ‘Home-Groups’ which are meeting each week in various member’s homes, and we are currently in the process of completely re-setting “Home-Groups” to serve the demographic of members more closely and to reduce group sizes to between 6 and 8 members. We will also use members of the leadership team to lead these

groups to enable improved transparency across the fellowship and to make the leadership more approachable.

Members are committed to Community activities such as Baptists Together in Weston, Alpha, Street Pastors, Renew, Foodbank, Film nights, Craft days, Mums & Toddlers, BWO Ladies meeting, Ladies Fellowship, Baptism, Coffee Stop and Warm Spaces, Men's fellowship and Armchair Dancing.

Baptist Churches Together in Weston: For the previous two years we, together with Worle Baptist Church, Clarence Park Baptist Church, Bristol Road Baptist Church and Parklands Community Church, have been developing much closer working relationships under the guidance of our Regional Minister. The network of Baptist Church in Weston has covenanted together to share in being the missional people God has called us to be. We and the other churches are committed to appoint ministers who will be part of a joint ministry team. Every minister appointed will be part of a shared accountable team, where one of the ministers will act as the team leader.

Together we affirm and are committed to:

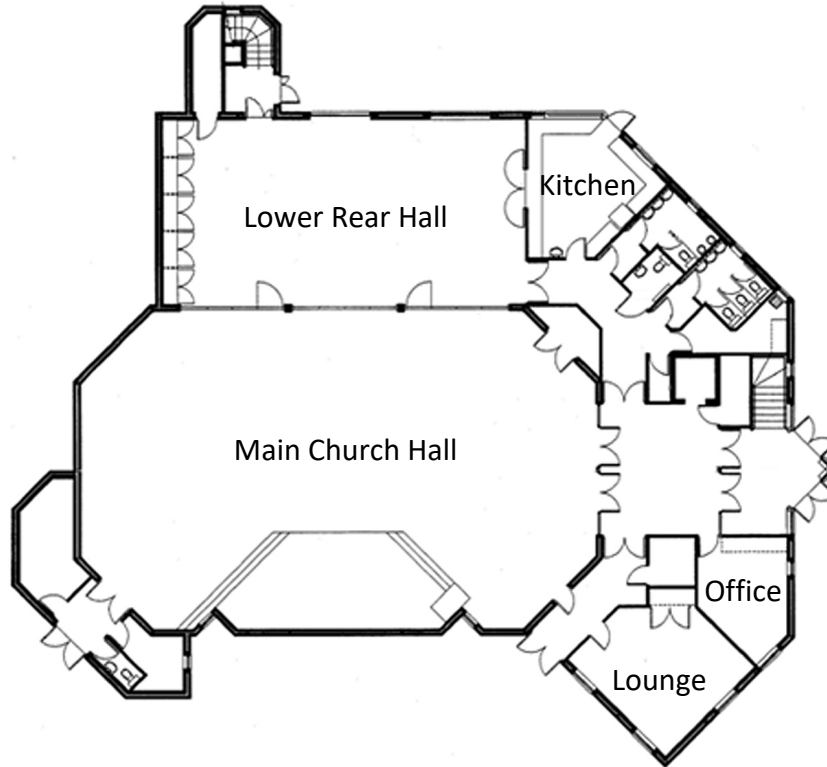
1. We affirm our Evangelical beliefs.
2. We affirm one another's congregations, as interdependent churches who are committed to work together to fulfil God's missional calling.
3. We affirm our joint desire to see God's Kingdom come and His will done in Weston-Super-Mare and surrounding area.
4. We commit ourselves to continue to develop structures between us that enable greater collaboration regarding our joint mission.
5. We commit ourselves to realise more deeply our common life and shared mission to bring about closer collaboration in all areas of witness and service in our community of Weston-Super-Mare.
6. We commit ourselves to support each other through prayer and where appropriate, share our resources to fulfil our missional calling.

This collaboration started with Alpha Courses that are run 3 times per year. In addition, working alongside Renew Wellbeing, a national charity, we have opened a shared space for the community located at 193 High Street Worle. It is at the heart of a strong community and provides a cafe style space that is welcoming and inclusive for use by the community of Weston for free, with the sole focus of improving mental and emotional wellbeing. The tag line for this charity and for our proposal is "Quiet shared spaces where it's OK not to be OK." Renew 193 is run by volunteers from Weston Baptist Churches, funded by MBC.

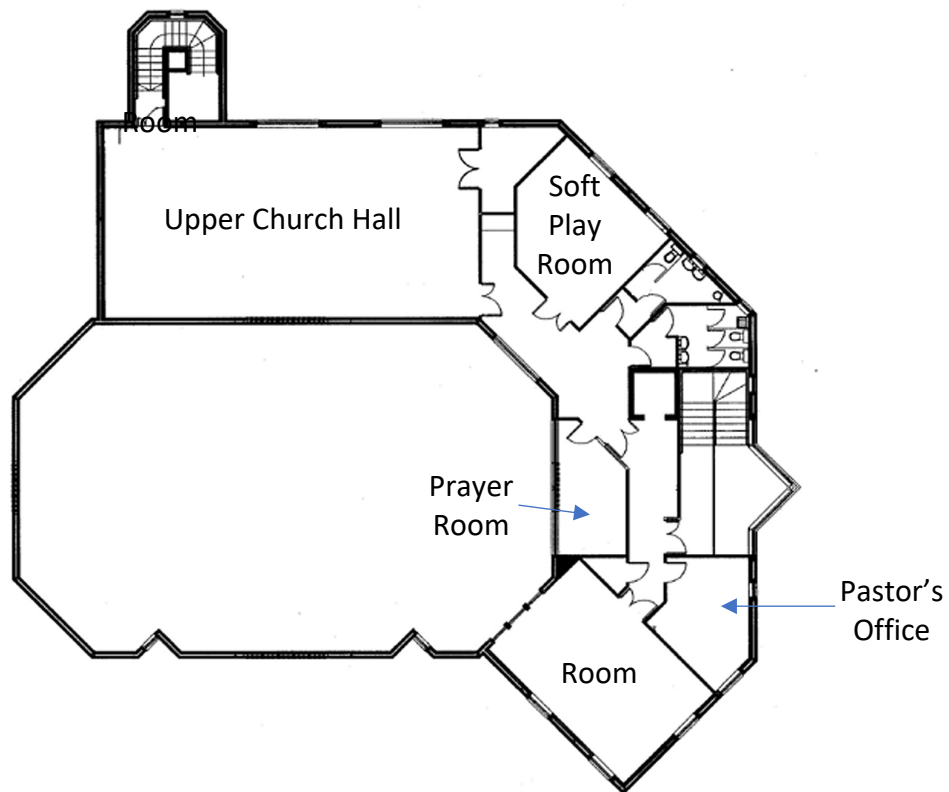
Street Pastors are supported by volunteers from our church as is our local foodbank, for which we acted as a local hub for the distribution of food items for the previous 3 years.

Our building is also used by the Blood Donors, Age UK, etc. and is hired by various organisations to supplement our costs.

Together with Clarence Baptist Church and Worle Baptist Church, we are jointly committed to provide a minister-in-training student placement from 24th April 2023 until 31st July 2024 (approx. 15 months).
MBC ground floor layout.



MBC 1st floor layout.



D. The Buildings

Our current church building was constructed in 1999 after it was discovered that there were major failings with our old church building. Our new build was funded by members and was paid for within a few years.

Church Manse: The church owns a manse, which is currently let to a tenant family as our current pastor was found more suitable accommodation closer to the church.

The layout of our church building is shown in the diagrams above. The acoustic doors between the main church hall and the lower rear hall can be opened to create a larger area.

E. Wider connections

Baptist: The church is in membership of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Evangelical Alliance. It supports both Home Mission and BMS World Mission financially and in prayer. The church is the home church and financially supports a family serving with YWAM, a couple working in Africa and a couple serving in Norway. We are linked with a BMS missionary working in Thailand and with a couple working in Bangladesh. MBC is also linked with a Baptist Church in Lezhë, Albania.

Our church leadership team have taken part in Re:imagine, as local churches and Webnet’s regional team, we want to see growth in terms of lives transformed by Jesus. Our aim is to work in partnership with churches towards the kind of developments which result in growth.

Over the last four years, three members of our church family have successfully undertaken the Invest course. Invest is a one-year part time training initiative run by WEBNET and local Churches, for existing leaders to grow through tailored training, mentoring and support without having to leave their regular lives and jobs to go to Bible college full time.

The leadership team together with several selected members, undertook a Full Spectrum Review with Caroline Anderson Review, which provided a unique and challenging opportunity to review our church organisation from a 360-degree perspective. The leadership felt that over the last 20 years or so, we have been under spiritual attack and under guidance, left each of these issues at the foot of The Cross. We also discerned the following Godly Beliefs:

- MBC is a family where people feel loved, cared for, can thrive, and have a sense of belonging
- MBC leadership believe that by prioritising to communicate with God and the church family, the church will become strong and united.
- At MBC, all are welcomed to the table of the King of all Kings where all are blessed to serve.
- At MBC we do everything in love.
- Jesus is our pilot, and we follow His leadership.
- We choose to give God the very best in all we do as we commit to growing in unity as a family affirming the value of each person's gifts.

We recognise that these belief statements were produced to counter recognised negative views. The language used may not be directly accessible or easily understood by all (e.g. reference to the "table of the King of Kings" was not framed with a view to Holy Communion), and there may be different understanding of the role of Jesus as "pilot"). There may be a case for reviewing the wording without seeking to undermine the principles. We believe that we should apply these Godly Beliefs in everything that we do as a church community/family, irrespective of age, gender, and background and we aim to edify, support, and provide fellowship to all our church fellowship.

Ecumenical (local): The church is part of 'Churches Together in Weston-super-Mare which, in addition to us, consists of two Anglican churches, a Methodist church, a Roman Catholic church, a United Reformed church and a Community Church. It is an active group which holds united services twice a year and a joint Act of Witness in the town on Good Friday. There are occasional meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest.

4. The Church we would like to see

Over the last three years, the church agreed that

1. Above all, we should be a people who love God, love each other, and love the community we are called to serve.
2. We want to see people of all ages using and developing their gifts and fully participating in the life of the church and its mission. We are aware that there is a need for a more structured approach to identifying and using the gifts God has given to us as a body.
3. We want to be a church that is growing and moving forward with God. However, we recognise that our priority should be to grow 'the kingdom' rather than 'our church' (We admit that at times it has felt like the other way round!).

4. We particularly want to develop work in the areas of new housing being built around the town – in partnership with other local churches.
5. We need to develop and implement strategies for moving people from the fringe of the church (and beyond) to the centre – changing them from contacts to disciples.
6. We want to continue to be rooted in God's Word and to be helped in this by receiving inspirational Bible-based preaching and teaching – from a new minister and others who are already part of our church.
7. We want to be a people who keep on supporting and encouraging each other in our day-to-day life and who are better equipped to be 'salt and light' in the communities God has placed us in.

5. The Minister we believe that we need

We believe therefore that we need a minister who will help us develop our life together in this way. Specifically, we believe we need someone who:

- Has a deep and profound respect for the Bible in their own lives and knows how to communicate that well to others – and will enable other church members to do that as well.
- Will inspire, challenge, encourage and work innovatively with the whole church to move us forward together into the future that God has prepared for us.
- Has a collaborative style of leadership which will enable him/her to work well with our existing (and future) ministry teams and with the other Baptist Churches in Weston.
- Has a passion for and will encourage and lead the Church in prayer gatherings seeking God's will whilst building God's Kingdom.
- Will encourage, inspire, and equip church members to use and develop their God-given gifts both inside and outside the church.
- Will help us have greater confidence to live out the gospel in the community through words and actions.
- Has the experience and passion to effectively integrate the people we have connected with, into the church community.
- Has involvement with pastoral care and is innovative to maintain and grow our youth and young families.
- Recognises the need to adapt methods and practices to suit the society we now live in, enabling the church to connect with a changing world.